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480 GatesMcDonald Jobs Coming into Columbus City Negotiations bring 20th Jobs Deal to fill Downtown Office Space

(Columbus) The City of Columbus' effort to attract and create jobs through the Downtown Business Plan crafted by Mayor Michael B. Coleman and local leaders is gathering positive momentum with another deal announced today. GatesMcDonald, an affiliate of Nationwide, will move 480 Central Ohio employees into the City to 215 North Front Street this year, under a deal negotiated with the Mayor and the City's Downtown Development Office.

"Despite the on-going anxiety of the national recession, the City of Columbus continues to market itself as a great place to do business, especially in our downtown where we have now signed agreements bringing 1,408 new jobs into the community in just over a year," said Mayor Michael B. Coleman. "We are building momentum and confidence in the downtown market, and that effort is going to continue through 2004."

Working together with Columbus City Council, the Downtown Resource Office, the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation and area businesses, the Downtown Business Plan announced in 2002 is reaching several important goals already. There are currently more than 3,000 new apartments and condominiums either open, under construction or in development, North Bank Park is under construction as the first part of a new downtown park system, and 20 Office Incentive agreements have been signed bringing a total of 1,408 new jobs into downtown from outside the City.

"This is a win for Columbus, a win for downtown and a win for GatesMcDonald," said Donna A. James, president of Nationwide Strategic Investments and board chair of GatesMcDonald. "We are proud to work with the City of Columbus. The City's proposed downtown incentive enhancements will make downtown more competitive in the marketplace."

City Council will consider legislation on Monday to revise the Office Incentive Program and will consider applications to offer those jobs incentives to GatesMcDonald in the coming weeks. The revised incentive will allow longer negotiated terms of up to eight years for companies bringing more than 400 employees into downtown Columbus.

"This is further proof: we mean business downtown," said Columbus City Council President Matt Habash. "Thanks to strong economic development and job creation champions like Maryellen O'Shaughnessy, the administration and our business leadership, Columbus continues building its ability to attract great employers like GatesMcDonald to the city's core. Jobs here mean more jobs overall and more dollars to pay for critical city services. I'm excited by our positive progress."

GatesMcDonald plans to move in September, relocating operations from Hilliard to the office space owned by Nationwide at 215 N. Front St. GatesMcDonald associates will occupy 100,000 square feet of office space and increase Nationwide's downtown workforce to nearly 6,500, further reinforcing Nationwide's presence as the largest private employer in downtown Columbus.

The office incentive that GatesMcDonald will apply for is valued at approximately \$1.6 million over eight years, based upon an estimated annual payroll of \$20 million. During this eight-year period the City expects to collect an additional \$1.6 million of new tax revenues that will be generated by the 480 jobs.

GatesMcDonald, a Nationwide affiliate since 1969, is the nation's leading provider of total absence management solutions and helps employers control costs associated with managing absence, illness and injury. It serves approximately 65,000 customers across the country, ranging from small employers to Fortune 500 companies. The company employs more than 800 associates in 11 offices across the country, with the majority located in Central Ohio.

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